DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 467 365 UD 035 194

AUTHOR	Coulson, Andrew J.
TITLE	With Clear Eyes, Sincere Hearts and Open Minds: A Second Look at Public Education in America.
INSTITUTION	Mackinac Center for Public Policy, Midland, MI.
ISBN	ISBN-1-890624-28-4
PUB DATE	2002-07-00
NOTE	39p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Mackinac Center for Public Policy, 140 Main Street, PO Box 568, Midland, MI 48640. Tel: 517-631-0900; Fax: 517-631-0964; e-mail: mcpp@mackinac.org; Web Site: http://www.mackinac.org.
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Class Size; Educational Finance; Educational Improvement; Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; National Curriculum; *Public Education; Public Policy; School Choice; Standardized Tests

ABSTRACT

This booklet recommends cooperatively re-examining U.S. public education and recognizing that though there are disagreements in the ongoing education debate, everyone's goals are the same (to provide all children with a quality education and to prepare them for participation in public life). After noting that schools are not living up to American ideals, the booklet explains the nature of the problem, discusses the importance of caring about the nation's children, and examines past efforts to address educational problems (increasing spending on education, reducing class size, nationalizing curriculum and testing, creating model schools, and allowing school choice). These reforms have all had problems. The booklet notes that the past reforms highlight the need for a systematic, reliable, lasting mechanism for promoting educational excellence. It recommends looking for trends in the kinds of systems that worked well or poorly across many different cultural settings, comparing educational outcomes between similar and contemporary societies that adopted different education systems, and determining what happened to educational outcomes when a given society abandoned one education system in favor of another. It concludes that essential elements of an education market include parental choice, direct financial responsibility for parents, freedom for educators, competition among schools, and the profit motive for schools. (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 467 365

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Elizabeth Moser

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

With Clear Eyes, Sincere Hearts and Open Minds

A Second Look at Public Education in America

by Andrew J. Coulson

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

UD 035 194

2

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

The **Mackinac Center for Public Policy** is a nonpartisan research and educational organization devoted to improving the quality of life for all Michigan citizens by promoting sound solutions to state and local policy questions. The Mackinac Center assists policy makers, scholars, business people, the media, and the public by providing objective analysis of Michigan issues. The goal of all Center reports, commentaries, and educational programs is to equip Michigan citizens and other decision makers to better evaluate policy options. The Mackinac Center for Public Policy is broadening the debate on issues that have for many years been dominated by the belief that government intervention should be the standard solution. Center publications and programs, in contrast, offer an integrated and comprehensive approach that considers:

All Institutions. The Center examines the important role of voluntary associations, business, community and family, as well as government.

All People. Mackinac Center research recognizes the diversity of Michigan citizens and treats them as individuals with unique backgrounds, circumstances, and goals.

All Disciplines. Center research incorporates the best understanding of economics, science, law, psychology, history, and morality, moving beyond mechanical cost/benefit analysis.

All Times. Center research evaluates long-term consequences, not simply short-term impact.

Committed to its independence, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy neither seeks nor accepts any government funding. It enjoys the support of foundations, individuals, and businesses who share a concern for Michigan's future and recognize the important role of sound ideas. The Center is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. For more information on programs and publications of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, please contact:

Mackinac Center for Public Policy
140 West Main Street
P.O. Box 568
Midland, Michigan 48640
(989) 631-0900 • Fax (989) 631-0964
www.mackinac.org • mcpp@mackinac.org

With Clear Eyes, Sincere Hearts and Open Minds

A Second Look at Public Education in America

by Andrew J. Coulson

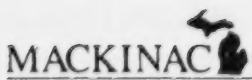
July 2002

© 2002 by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, Midland, Michigan

Permission to reprint in whole or in part is hereby granted, provided that the Mackinac Center for Public Policy is properly cited.

ISBN: 1-890624-28-4

SP2002-03



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

About the Author

Andrew J. Coulson is the Mackinac Center for Public Policy's senior fellow in education policy. Andrew is author of the book, "Market Education: The Unknown History," available from Transaction Publishers. Prior to joining the Center, he was a senior research associate at the Social Philosophy and Policy Center in Kentucky. He has written numerous articles and essays for academic journals and for newspapers including The Wall Street Journal and The Seattle Times.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

With Clear Eyes, Sincere Hearts and Open Minds

A Second Look at Public Education in America

by Andrew J. Coulson

It is time to take a second look at public education in America. Not individually or combatively, as we have so often in the past, but collectively and cooperatively. It is time we recognized that whatever our disagreements in the ongoing education debate, our goals, in the end, are the same. As a nation, we all cherish the ideals that every child should have access to a good education, that school should not only equip students for success in private life but also for participation in public life, and that our education system should help us to build strong and harmonious communities.

Yes, there is disagreement as to how well our schools are performing, and how they might be improved, but the fact that they are not living up to our ideals is undeniable. Critics from all across the political landscape have rightfully lamented our failure to provide our poorest and most disenfranchised children with a quality education. Our shortcomings in preparing students for the modern workplace are well known to the nation's job seekers and employers. Sparse voter turnouts, civic disengagement among young Americans, and students' lack of knowledge of our nation's history and institutions, are regularly lamented. We cannot sweep under the rug the fact that public school parents are frequently thrown into conflict with one another over everything from curriculum and methods to sex education and school prayer.

These are grave problems, yet we allow them to fester for generation after generation. The hostility and distrust that pervade education policy discussions have poisoned our ability to work together toward a solution. This cannot continue. Our children are too important.

So, please, let us forget our politics, put aside our preconceptions, and acknowledge a simple fact: The people working in education do so because they love children. And our dearest wish is to secure for the next generation an education worthy of that love. If we can manage to cease hostilities for a while, we just may be able to make that wish a reality.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Clear Eyes

Here as elsewhere, the shortest path to a solution begins with a sober understanding of the problem. How and where are we falling short of our educational ideals? To what degree? In attempting to answer these questions we must be unflinching. Glossing over imperfections in our present system of education will only delay or prevent their correction. At the same time, it should be clear that the point is not to ascribe blame to individuals. Our educators are as good and as dedicated a group of people as can be found in any profession, and even if we were to swap them for an entirely different workforce tomorrow, it would do nothing to address whatever flaws may exist in the system's design.

Our greatest problem, and yet the one whose magnitude we most often underestimate, is our astonishing failure to serve low-income and minority children. According to the most recent International Adult Literacy Survey, one quarter of 16- to 25-year-old Americans cannot read or write well enough to understand a bus schedule, let alone put together a resume or read a newspaper.[1] We have condemned one quarter of our young men and women to remain on the periphery of society, locked them out of most gainful employment, and shut them off from the joy and solace of the written word. Of these tens of millions of young people, a disproportionate number come from poor or minority families.[2]

Every day, all over the country, countless other children also are shortchanged. There is the child who, for any of a number of reasons, lags behind his age-mates in math or science. This student is nonetheless pushed ahead year after year, to spare him the stress of being "flunked." Instead of reassessing the system that would inflict such trauma, we turn away from this child's growing frustration and confusion with the subject matter and his lack, at each successive grade, of the underlying knowledge necessary to grasp his current assignments. It is as a result of this "social promotion" that barely literate, barely numerate students can be graduated from high school, ill-equipped to deal with the modern world.

On the other end of the spectrum is the little girl who begins avidly reading horse stories in her adolescence and leaps quickly ahead to ever richer, more sophisticated works of literature. By the time she reaches high school, she yearns to be engaged by more challenging

discussions and would profit from reading great works of literature. Sometimes this spark is kindled into an educational blaze, with classes tailored to her advanced abilities. Too often, though, it is allowed to fizzle instead by a system designed to serve a mythical "average" student rather than meet the varied needs of the individual children in its care. How much do we lose when we fail to fan these sparks of excitement and love of learning? How much do our children lose?

And what of the great teachers? Those who, year after year, elicit from their students achievements no one thought possible? Those who devise new ways of conveying a deep and lasting understanding of their subjects? At best, we try to identify a handful of them, handing out awards for recognition of a job well done. And there it ends. Many more top teachers labor in relative anonymity, known only to the their immediate colleagues and students. Even those identified on the state or national level are seldom given the opportunity to broadly disseminate their successful techniques, or to design new lesson plans for use by vast numbers of students.

This indifference to excellent teaching has caused a staggering educational and cultural loss to ourselves, our children and our grandchildren. Imagine a world where penicillin, electricity, and modern agricultural techniques never spread beyond the handful of individuals who developed them. Conversely, imagine a world where the best educational materials and techniques were continually searched for, identified, and made widely available; where untested fads could not gain or keep a foothold, and where improvements were constantly sought for even the most soundly proven and effective methods. Our inability to bring the remarkable progress evident in so many areas of human life to the field of education, and especially the inability to get the best educational methods and materials to all the students who need them, has a painful and ever-mounting cost.

Conversely, how can we tolerate the annual pageant in which ineffective teachers are shuffled from one school to another, rather than being helped to improve or dismissed? Though job security is a valuable asset in attracting people to the teaching profession, it is impossible to justify the social cost of keeping teachers who fail to

perform adequately year after year. Four out of five teachers agree that it must be made easier to fire their incompetent peers.[3] They know that even though these individuals comprise a small portion of the total workforce, on a national level they impede the educational progress of countless children.

Finally, we must not forget the vitriolic conflicts that have relentlessly beset our education system. Though the "school wars" of the past century are sometimes thought to be inevitable in a free and democratic nation, or even to be embodiments of that freedom and democracy, these views ring hollow. Our religious diversity is no less than our diversity of educational interests and preferences, and yet we have managed to build one of the most peaceful heterogeneous religious communities in the world. No, our constant bickering over curriculum, methods, school prayer, sex education, and the like are not integral parts of education in a free society. They are evidence that we have yet to find a harmonious way for Americans to pursue their shared educational goals while also carrying on their varied traditions and meeting their unique needs.

Sincere Hearts

The problems with our education system are thus broader and deeper than we usually admit. Do we care? Do we really care, in a heartfelt, personal way, what happens to the millions of boys and girls that emerge from high school unable to read simple texts? Do we care about the children who lose confidence because we push them relentlessly from one grade to the next, whether or not they have mastered the material? Does it bother us to think of all the brilliant young minds whose excitement about science or literature fades for lack of encouragement? Do we have the will to finally end our balkanizing battles for control of public education?

If we answer yes to these questions, we must act. More than that, we must take effective action—because with genuine caring comes genuine commitment. It is not enough just to empathize with our children's educational plight. Nor is it enough to jump on the first reform bandwagon that rolls by, hoping it will do some good. If we really care about our kids we must base our reforms on reason and evidence. Unless we make every conceivable effort to get results, we betray our children and reduce

our commitment to an exercise in feel-good futility.

These are our kids. Their problems are our problems. We have to build them a better system of education. We must throw open our minds to an honest appraisal of past and present, and to an unconstrained vision of the future.

Open Minds

But though we must be prepared to consider entirely new approaches to public education, it would be foolish to ignore the experiences of the past. Dedicated reformers have been doing their best to address our educational problems for decades, and while the problems persist, we can learn much from the reformers' efforts. Among the most strongly advocated and widely implemented ideas have been: increasing spending, shrinking classes, nationalizing curriculum and testing, creating "model schools," and allowing "school choice." Let us look briefly at each in turn.

Increasing Spending

You've heard the expression, "you get what you pay for?" The fact that better products and services usually cost more than inferior ones has conditioned us to assume that the same pattern holds true for anything, including education. Increasing our expenditures on public schooling has thus been seen as a promising way to improve its quality since the birth of the institution some 150 years ago. Though it's difficult to trace spending patterns that far back, we do have more recent statistics. What those figures show is that we now spend roughly five times more per pupil per year than we did in 1950, in real, inflation-adjusted dollars.[4]

Many factors have contributed to this rise. Children now spend more days in school per year, schools offer a wider variety of programs, school buildings are larger and more expensive, there are many more teachers, administrators and non-teaching staff per student than there once were, salaries have grown, and, in recent decades, the number of students classified as learning disabled (and hence eligible for special services) has skyrocketed.[5]

Yet, this tremendous growth in the apparatus of public schooling, and the corresponding dramatic rise in its cost, has not ended a history of stagnation and decline in academic achievement during the last three quarters of a century. Yes, a motivated researcher can find five- or

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

15-year spans during which scores on a particular test went up or stayed the same. But when the most reliable measures of student achievement trends are taken together, they point at best to stagnation, and at worst to a steady deterioration of scholastic achievement over the past 70 years. The most alarming evidence of a decline has been in the most important skill of all: reading.[6] This finding is sadly consistent with the already cited International Adult Literacy Survey, in which nearly one in four Americans ages 16 to 25 scored at or below the Survey's lowest level of literacy.[7]

The accuracy of this picture is corroborated by numerous other research findings and examples at the state and district levels. Over the years, many studies have compared how well students in higher-spending public schools performed compared to their peers in lower-spending schools. The overall conclusion has been that higher spending is not significantly associated with higher achievement.[8] Even researchers initially skeptical of this conclusion have found it to be true: Higher public school spending generally does not help children learn more.[9]

Indeed, some of the most troubled, lowest performing districts in the country are also among those spending the most money. Baltimore, Hartford and Washington, D.C., for example, all spend upwards of $9,000 per pupil annually (the national average is about $7,000), yet are plagued by poor test scores and decaying facilities. Between the late 1980s and the late 1990s, Kansas City, Missouri became the highest spending district in the country, adding well over $1 billion to its existing budget in obedience to a court ordered reform plan. Despite this unprecedented infusion of funds, overall student achievement did not improve, and the judge responsible for the order eventually rescinded it, acknowledging its failure.

Nor is the United States alone in this problem. Recent research on the performance of education systems in the 29 nations belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) finds a similar consistent pattern of declining educational productivity.[10]

Please understand that this is not to say that higher spending is never helpful. There certainly are cases where additional public school expenditures have yielded benefits. The conclusion that we

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

are forced to draw from the evidence is only that these cases are the exceptions, and that they are outweighed by the more numerous cases in which more money did not equal more learning. However much we would like to believe that we could transform our schools just by digging a little deeper into our pockets, this notion simply does not stand up to scrutiny.

It has often been noted that our public school system is not able to make consistently effective use of the funds it receives. When many districts around the country are unable even to maintain their buildings in a reasonable state of repair despite adequate funding, it should come as no surprise that greater funding has not improved the far more difficult task of student learning.[11] If we hope to improve our educational outcomes with higher spending, we will first have to change the system in such a way that we can be assured the money will be spent wisely.

Shrinking Classes

Few education reforms receive as much public approval as reducing class size. At least 21 states have adopted class-size-reduction programs since 1984.[12] Washington state voters passed a ballot initiative to further the cause in 2000. And Congress voted in 1999 to set aside $1.2 billion dollars to subsidize such programs. California alone dedicated an additional $1.5 billion to shrink classes from just under 30 to 20 students.[13] Teachers, too, are solidly behind class-size reduction. The American Federation of Teachers supports significant class-size reduction,[14] and the National Education Association (NEA) has a goal of reducing all classes to 15 or fewer students.[15]

Does reducing class size produce the kind of improvement we seem to expect? It certainly seems reasonable to assume that the more attention teachers can focus on each student, the better students will do.

Unfortunately, what seems reasonable in theory doesn't always hold true in practice—that's why we do studies. Recently, the journal Psychological Science in the Public Interest published a very thorough investigation that sifted through the reams of available literature on the subject.[16] After poring over decades-worth of research, the authors concluded that very little can be said with regard to higher achievement as a result of smaller classes. Very tentatively, they sug-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

gest that reducing class size to 15 students may improve test scores in kindergarten and possibly the first grade. Though that gain persists in later years, no added benefit seems to be achieved from reducing class size beyond this point.

In other words, there is reason to believe that reducing class size in kindergarten and perhaps the first grade may do some good, but in older grades there is no evidence this will improve achievement. And even such a weak endorsement is qualified by the study's authors, who warn that class-size achievement effects may not be generalizable to other schools and students.

It seems that we have thrown our support behind smaller classes not because of the evidence, but because they seem like a good idea, and because they are less controversial and easier to implement than alternative reforms (if sometimes more expensive). Shrinking class sizes across the board allows us to feel like we're doing something to help our kids. But if we really care about solving the serious educational problems affecting all our children, we will have to look beyond our feelings and ask what truly works.

Nationalizing Curriculum and Testing

Until the mid 1800s, education in the United States was local. Virtually all decisions were made at the school level, whether the schools operated independently or were run by local government.

A chief argument for the creation of our modern state-level school systems was that the centralization of decision-making in the hands of experts would usher in a new era of more effective teaching methods and materials, and thus lead to significant improvement in student achievement. These same arguments are heard today, though it is now widely suggested that standards and testing should be directed by the federal government. In a May 2001 survey, 78 percent of Americans supported nationally standardized tests.[17]

Is our support for nationalizing curriculum and testing justified? Or is it another example of something that seems like it ought to work but really doesn't? There are a couple of ways to answer that question. Most obviously, we can look at how well the move to state-level curricula and testing have played out.

One of the most decisive examples was California's adoption

13

of a new statewide reading instruction curriculum in 1987. The adoption process was very much what one might expect, with curriculum designers from all over the country being solicited to submit their proposals, and a state committee of education experts selecting the winner from among them. It was the same sort of process by which many other curriculum- and textbook-selection decisions are made around the country.

Over the next several years, reading scores on the California Assessment Program declined steadily. Seven years into the new reading program, California's fourth-grade reading scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) had fallen to dead last in the nation.

Though some suggested that this abysmal showing might be due to the state's high immigrant population or other demographic factors, the evidence indicated otherwise. In fourth grade reading, California's white students—when considered separately from their minority counterparts—scored worst in the nation in reading. The state's Hispanic students also scored worst, and its black students were second worst in the nation.

What had gone wrong? As it happened, the education experts on the state curriculum committee had selected a program that eliminated structured, synthetic phonics, the practice of systematically teaching children to read words by sounding out their constituent parts and then blending those sounds together. Evidence showing the great importance of phonics in early reading instruction was already well established before the committee members made their decision.[18]

So why did the committee's experts reject all the instructional programs that adhered to the consensus of reading research? Wishful thinking. Structured, teacher-directed methods of instruction run counter to the philosophy that has held sway in teacher training programs for more than 70 years. Education philosophers and theorists, those who have guided the curriculum in colleges of education for a century, espouse a naturalistic teaching philosophy that states all learning is natural, and that structured, teacher-directed lessons are stifling and harmful. So, when it came time for a group of educators to choose a method of reading instruction for California's millions of children, they eschewed structured,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

empirically proven phonics lessons, opting instead for the unproven but philosophically appealing "whole language" approach.

To blame California's rejection of effective reading instruction methods on this committee would be a terrible mistake. These were well-meaning individuals doing what they thought, and what they had been taught, was right. There is no reason to think that an entirely different group of people would not have made the same choice, in spite of the evidence in favor of phonics.

The problem was not with the people involved, but with the system in which they operated. If there had been a mechanism in place that would have encouraged committee members to heed the most reliable research, and that would have strongly tied their own professional futures to student outcomes, then and only then could this committee, and the next, and the next, be expected to consistently make sound decisions.

The case of California is not unique. It is just one episode in a long history of arbitrary curriculum and textbook selection decisions made by well-meaning expert educators. Occasionally their decisions have been good ones; more often they have been dubious or even disastrous.[19]

Dismayed by the lack of evidence mustered by supporters of centralized curriculum guidelines, Columbia University researcher Richard M. Wolf decided to compare the results of the nations participating the Third International Mathematics and Science Study to determine whether or not having national achievement standards correlated with higher achievement. They didn't. Though most of the participating countries did "have a national curriculum or syllabus," Wolf wrote, there was "virtually no relationship between student performance and having a national curriculum or syllabus."[20]

The 150-year-old prediction that centralizing power over the curriculum in the hands of experts would ensure sound pedagogical decisions has been proved false by hard, sad experience. Centralization of authority doesn't provide an incentive structure that consistently forces educators to heed research evidence and to focus on outcomes rather than on idealized notions of how children should learn.

The record of state testing programs is equally troubled. A great body of evidence has been amassed

over the past decade pointing to widespread corruption in these programs. High-stakes test results are referred to in the scholarly literature as "polluted" and "contaminated" by fraud and are considered to be virtually useless as measures of actual student achievement. The problem ranges from occasional outright cheating by teachers and principals to inflate student scores, to the more common practices of "teaching to the test" and of preventing potentially low-scoring students from taking the tests.

These problems occur all over the country, from Michigan[21] to California,[22] from suburban Connecticut[23] to central Chicago,[24] and everywhere in between. By far, the most telling evidence of cheating comes from public-school educators themselves. A 1992 survey asked 2,256 teachers, principals, testing coordinators and superintendents from around the country whether their colleagues engaged in blatant cheating. Forty-four percent said yes.[25] Fifty-five percent of the teachers surveyed were aware of flagrantly unethical testing practices such as changing student's answers, teaching specific test items in advance of the test, and giving hints during the test. The higher the stakes associated with a particular test, the greater the incentive to massage its results.

Apart from the fact that high-stakes tests have become unreliable measures of student achievement, there are other reasons to be apprehensive about them. Unbeknownst to most education reformers, high-stakes national testing programs are not a recent idea. More than a century ago, England put in place a system whereby schools were paid based on the number of students passing a set of government tests. Scientist T. H. Huxley observed at the time that this "Payment by Results" program "did not compel any schoolmaster to leave off teaching anything; but, by the very simple process of refusing to pay for many kinds of teaching, it has practically put an end to them."[26]

Even when money is not directly at stake, evaluating schools solely on the basis of high-profile tests can have the same deleterious effects. As already noted, U.S. public schools already alter their curricula to fit the material they know to be on state- or district-level tests. To the extent that a subject is not part of a mandatory state curriculum or testing program, it is likely to be marginalized. This trend is also evident in England under its current

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

National Curriculum. According to the National Association of Head Teachers, the "obsession with passing tests in English, mathematics and science [means] other subjects [are] being overlooked."[27]

Most of us agree on the importance of a thorough, well-designed curriculum. And the public is solidly in favor of academic testing as one way to find out how much children are learning and how well schools are performing. But the benefits to be derived from mandatory imposition of a particular curriculum or set of tests by state and federal governments are not supported by the evidence.

Creating "Model Schools"

The past century has been filled with efforts to create model schools or programs that embody recipes for success. The assumption underlying these efforts has been that, if we can identify a set of practices that works well in one or more schools, it would or could automatically be made available to children everywhere. Let's look at some of the most interesting attempts along these lines.

The still famous education philosopher John Dewey founded the Laboratory School (the Lab) at the University of Chicago in 1896, and remained its director until 1904 when he left due to disagreements with the University administration.[28] It is perhaps the best-known "progressive" school in the nation, and boasts many remarkable achievements. Ninety-nine percent of its graduates go on to college, and a third of its senior class is typically among the semi-finalists of the National Merit Scholarship Program. An independent institution, the Lab includes a nursery, an elementary, a middle and a high school, with a combined enrollment of roughly 1,600 pupils.[29]

Even before the Lab School was a gleam in Mr. Dewey's eye, a Washington, D.C. public school named Dunbar was making its mark on history. Between the late 1800s and the mid 1900s, Dunbar's achievements were staggering. Among its graduates were a general, a federal judge, a Cabinet member, a Senator and the discoverer of blood plasma. What all these men, and the rest of the Dunbar alumni, had in common was that they were African Americans. At a time when overt racism and deep-seated prejudice were everywhere, and much of the white population thought blacks were uneducable, Dunbar students were soundly outscoring their white counterparts in test after test.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Though it lacked proper funding, and though few of its teachers or administrators had attended colleges of education, Dunbar did have several advantages. Because the city's white public school officials wanted little to do with them, the principals of Dunbar enjoyed great control over staffing, curriculum and discipline policy. Its teachers were often brilliant and highly educated, having graduated from institutions such as Oberlin and Harvard. Rather than students being assigned to the school automatically, they had to choose to attend. Because of its reputation for academic rigor, students who did choose Dunbar knew what they were in for before they arrived, and once there, knew that expectations for their performance were high.

Ironically, it was desegregation—intended to improve the education of African-Americans —that spelled the end of excellence for Dunbar High School. Under the U.S. Supreme Court's 1968 decision in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*,[30] choice-based student assignment programs that had the incidental effect of segregating the races were deemed unconstitutional. This went beyond the better-known *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling of 1954[31] which had ended only those programs that deliberately segregated the races. Once Dunbar ceased to be a school of choice, receiving students by random assignment, it came to be seen by school district administrators as just another D.C. public school. As such, they began to reassert their authority over it, and Dunbar's administrative and pedagogical freedom evaporated. By the 1990s, Dunbar could no longer be distinguished from any other troubled inner-city public school.[32]

Just as Dunbar's independence and excellence were being eroded, the federal government embarked on a bold program to create a score of different "model" educational programs. Dubbed "Follow Through," the program solicited curriculum and methodology proposals from education researchers, and then arranged to have 22 of these programs adopted in a host of schools around the country. Academic progress and attitudes of the students in these schools were then monitored during the 1960s and 70s, to determine which of the programs were most promising.

One of the participating programs, Direct Instruction, stood out. Direct Instruction system-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

atically broke new topics down into understandable parts, and then had students practice those component skills, eventually putting them back together to master the complete task. This program not only outperformed all others in teaching basic skills overall, it placed first in each of the subcategories of reading, arithmetic, spelling and language. Direct Instruction placed a close second in promoting advanced conceptual skills, and was even the most effective at boosting students' self-esteem and responsibility toward their work.

Today, the Follow Through experiment has been almost entirely forgotten by educators. On those rare occasions when it is mentioned to student teachers in colleges of education, its findings are misrepresented and the clear superiority of the Direct Instruction program goes unmentioned. Why? Because, as a highly structured, teacher-directed method, Direct Instruction runs counter to the naturalistic teaching philosophy that dominates the nation's schools of education. Not only did Direct Instruction fail to catch on in colleges of education or in public schools as a whole, it was eventually abandoned even by the schools that had used it so effectively during project Follow Through. Student performance at these schools predictably fell off thereafter.[33]

Though the federal government never followed through on Follow Through, numerous individuals and institutions have come up with their own pedagogical models in recent years, which they have attempted to get schools to adopt. Ten of these programs were reviewed by New York Times Magazine writer James Traub in 1999 for the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. Most of the educational models, Traub found, could not produce rigorous scientific evidence showing that they improved student achievement. The two programs that did produce what Traub considered strong supporting evidence were newer variations on Direct Instruction and Success for All, a crisis-intervention program designed to prevent inner-city children in the early grades from falling behind in reading and math.

Despite having been supported by substantial evidence for 40 years, variants of Direct Instruction are estimated to be in just 150 to 300[34] of the nation's approximately 92,000[35] public schools. Success for All is in use in 1,130 to 1,500 schools.[36] Just as Direct Instruction has its critics,

so does Success for All. It has been pointed out, for instance, that most of the studies supporting its effectiveness have been carried out by its creators.[37] An independent study conducted to evaluate the program's adoption in the Miami-Dade school district found it had no effect.[38] The program's creators have attributed the mediocre Florida results to an incomplete and/or improper implementation of their methods.

This highlights a problem: Even when real student gains are attributed to one of these model programs, the students tested are typically drawn from only one or a few schools, making it hard to generalize to other schools in other regions. What the studies show is that a given program can have a positive effect, not that it necessarily will. Though program creators often provide extensive support to schools adopting their plans, commitment to and understanding of the programs varies among the educators who use them. Sometimes, even when commitment is initially high, it deteriorates over time. Sometimes classroom educators make changes to or deletions from the program, which affects student outcomes.

For example, in defending the results of the Coalition for Essential Schools program, a high-expectations-oriented program founded in 1985, that organization's public relations director notes that: "When the changes embodied in the Coalition's nine common principles are fully implemented both inside the classroom and in the school as a whole, the effects are consistent, beneficial, and significant."[39] The problem is ensuring faithful adoption of such programs over the long haul. Susan J. Bodilly, a senior social scientist at RAND, a nonprofit research institute based in Santa Monica, Calif., has observed that few program designers have the level of expertise in implementation that would enable schools to do this on a systematically successful basis.[40]

Ensuring faithful implementation and achieving widespread distribution are two problems that have not troubled the Kumon chain of "after-school schools." Founded by Japanese high-school teacher Toru Kumon, the company offers tutoring services that identify the areas in which students are weak and then provides them with a graduated sequence of worksheets that build confidence, proficiency and eventually mastery in a wide range of mathematical and reading skills. Operated as a for-profit busi-

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ness, Kumon has expanded to meet growing demand. From its modest beginnings in 1958, it has grown to enroll 1.49 million students in Japan and an additional 1.36 million in other countries. More than 110,000 American children currently study at Kumon USA's 3,000 schools, and the number continues to grow.

The record of model schools and model programs is thus quite mixed. Some of the most empirically proven programs have been shunned by the public schools. Some fantastically successful public schools have blazed like suns for decades, only to fizzle out without ever being reproduced elsewhere. Some programs adopted in public schools have been successful in one location but not another. Some top private schools, such as the Laboratory School, continue to serve only a thousand or so students after a century of operation while others, such as Kumon, expand to serve millions within a matter of decades.

One thing the model schools/programs approach does show is that there's hope: Something out there works, we're not dealing with an insoluble social catastrophe. While the current system seems to doom the successful tactics that have been discovered to only spotty results, at least there are good results somewhere. Knowing this, it seems reasonable to ask why schools such as Kumon have spread like wildfire while others, like the Lab School, have not.

Giving Parents a Choice

The idea behind school choice is straightforward: Giving families a range of educational choices, and requiring schools to compete with one another for the opportunity to serve them, should bring the same advances and efficiencies to education that it has brought to so many other areas of human endeavor. Schools that do a good job serving families would thrive, while those that do a poor job would lose students until they improved, were taken over by their competitors, or closed.

But while some people see parental choice and competition between schools as promising reforms, and worth trying out, others see them as a threat to the very existence of public education. That, I suggest, is a mistake—albeit an understandable one.

The root of this mistake is our failure to distinguish between the fundamental ideals of public education and our current institutions of

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

public schooling. Our current system of state-run schools has been around for so long that we've come to view it as the only possible way of fulfilling our educational ideals. More than that, we've come to see our state-run school systems as indistinguishable from the goals that they are meant to achieve. As a result, any reform that significantly alters the way schooling is provided is now mistakenly seen as an attack on the whole idea of public education.

But public education is not a particular pile of bricks and mortar, nor is it a particular shelf full of regulatory minutiae. Public education is the idea that all children should have access to good schools, and that they should be prepared not just for success in private life, but also for participation in public life. If we are truly committed to these ideals of public education, we have to pursue them by the most effective possible means. We know that our current approach to public schooling is falling short of our expectations, and so we must be prepared to consider alternative approaches.

If a school system based on parental choice and competition can do a better job of fulfilling both our individual needs and our shared social goals, then we owe it to our children and ourselves to make that system as widely available as possible. The question is, can it?

Supporters of school choice believe it can, because they see their reform as a solution to the problems experienced with "model school" programs. Competition and parental choice, they believe, would give educators the incentive to adopt effective pedagogical programs, implement them widely, and maintain and improve them over time. Educators who succeeded in doing so would enjoy all the personal, professional, and financial rewards that their important work deserves, while those who failed to do so would risk putting their careers in jeopardy.

That, in a simplified form, is the theory. But the modern school choice movement is young, and no unanimity has yet been achieved on the best way to implement a choice program. A variety of proposals have been made, and some have already been implemented, and they must be evaluated on their performance in the real world. So let's look at the three of the most widely discussed and studied choice programs: charter schools, education vouchers, and tuition tax credits.

Charter schools are public schools that are allowed somewhat

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

greater latitude in choosing their curriculum and hiring their teachers than traditional public schools. Students generally have to choose to attend a charter school, and the schools have to accept everyone who applies or, if they are oversubscribed, must admit students on the basis of a random lottery.

Among the most recent surveys of the charter school research were a pair of reports published in October and November of 2000. The first report was by the National School Boards Association (NSBA),[41] a frequent critic of charter schooling, while the second was released by the Center for Education Reform (CER),[42] a supporter of the charter movement. Not at all surprisingly, the NSBA report condemned charter schools for having failed to live up to expectations in the areas of innovation and student achievement, while CER lauded the schools for their successes in these areas.

The ease with which these organizations could look at the same body of research and come to contradictory conclusions is explained by two factors: First, most of the research is not in the form of rigorous scientific experiments with concrete, measurable findings. Second, results have varied from one charter school to the next, and each side in the debate has had a tendency to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.

In judging the success of charter schooling, the current lack of conclusiveness described above is, well, inconclusive. Charter schools, and choice programs generally, do not promise that all freely-chosen schools will excel, but rather that the better schools and better methods will drive out the worse ones over time, leading to steady and continuous improvement in the public's desired educational outcomes.

Since charter schooling is less than a decade old, and most charter schools have been around for just a few years, it is still premature to say how well this process is working. For the moment, at least, no one disputes the fact that parental satisfaction is higher in charter schools than in traditional public schools, and that the movement is growing as a result.

Education voucher programs represent a more profound change than charter schools, giving parents not just a choice of government-run schools, but also allowing them to chose independent schools. Instead of education tax money always being given to public school

districts based on their enrollment figures, the money follows children to whichever public or independent schools their parents think will serve them best.

Research into the academic outcomes of voucher programs has been somewhat more consistent than that done on charter schools. Most rigorous, randomized experiments evaluating voucher programs have found academic benefits in one or more subjects after the first few years of participation.[43] This has not stopped a vigorous and often hostile debate over the significance of the findings. Critics allege that the gains are not generalizable beyond the studied groups, or that variations in the specific findings of different researchers cast doubt on the entire enterprise.

At present, the tide seems to have turned somewhat in favor of voucher supporters. Researchers at the University of Indiana, who found no significant benefit from the Cleveland voucher program in its first year of operation, are now reporting that they too are seeing higher performance from voucher students after several years of participation. Professor John Witte, whose early work on the Milwaukee voucher program was often cited by critics of vouchers, now counts himself among the supporters of that program.[44]

As with charter schools, the research does consistently show that parents are more satisfied, usually far more satisfied, with their chosen voucher schools than they were with their previous public schools. But the very freedom of parents to direct their own children's education is at the heart of other criticisms leveled at vouchers. Some critics fear that if all parents were allowed to make key educational choices for their children, integration and social harmony would suffer.

Yet another, usually quite separate, group of critics cautions that existing voucher programs should be evaluated solely on their own terms, rather than being treated as though they were tests of the underlying principles of parental choice and competition between schools. Their concern is that the specific restrictions, features, and omissions of existing voucher programs may have a powerful effect on their success or failure. Ignoring the details of current voucher programs, they suggest, could lead to erroneous conclusions about school choice programs more generally.

An alternative approach to ensuring universal access to the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

education marketplace is to offer a credit against state and local taxes for anyone who pays tuition for a child in an independent school. Instead of taxing families and then giving them back their money in the form of an education voucher, parents would be able to keep more of the money they themselves earned, and thus more easily afford tuition payments.

Even families who pay little or no state or local taxes can benefit from such a program. The process works like this: Businesses and individual taxpayers make donations to private scholarship funds, and claim a credit against their own taxes. Scholarship funds then distribute that money to families, paying some or all of their children's tuition at the independent schools of their choosing.

Tax credit programs have several variations. Some, like the program operating in Arizona, do not allow the credit to be taken against tuition payments for a specified child, instead requiring taxpayers to make donations only to scholarship funds for the benefit of anonymous children. This prevents parents from using the credit to offset their own children's educational expenses, just as it prevents friends, grandparents, and other relatives from helping out those closest to them. Such restrictions are generally politically motivated, and yield no obvious educational benefit.

Credits can also be phased in over time, to make it easier for the legislature, public school districts, and state treasury to handle migration of students from state-run schools to independent schools. By tying the phase in of a tax-credit program to a gradually rising income ceiling for families eligible to receive tuition assistance from private scholarship funds, it would be possible to ensure that the most needy families are the first to benefit.

One respect in which tax-credits are similar to the existing public school system is that no taxpayer is forced to subsidize religious education. A citizen who wanted to help low-income families gain access to independent schools, but who did not wish to support religious schooling, could make a donation to a strictly secular scholarship fund. Alternately, that citizen could simply not take the credit at all. Alternately, citizens who were not fundamentally opposed to religious education could donate to scholarship funds that treated religious and non-religious schools equally, leaving the choice up to individual parents. Since all the money spent under a tax credit

program is private money (it is never collected in taxes in the first place), there can be no entanglement of church and state.

Tax credits are superior to the existing public school system, and to charter schools, in that they do not discriminate against parents who wish to pursue a religious education for their children. The free exercise of religion guaranteed under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution would thus be more fully realized under a tax-credit system than it is today.

Without direct government funding of schools, there would be no need for extensive government involvement in the operation of schools, as there is with public schools today. Bureaucratic red tape, and the inertia of large government enterprises are frequently cited as problems with existing public schools, and these could go away entirely under a tax-credit system.

The tuition tax credit systems described above are quite a recent idea, but even the young and quite restrictive Arizona program, which limits the size of the credit to just $500 per taxpayer and does not allow businesses to take the credit, raised 17 million dollars for independent school tuition assistance in 2000, after just a few years of operation. By raising or eliminating existing limits and expanding the program to include education tax credits for businesses, the program could be expanded to serve every family who wished to participate.

One aspect in which tax credits, charter schools, and vouchers are similar is in their positive social effects. Early worries raised about choice programs have now been put to rest by numerous independent studies. In particular, concerns that parental choice would "cream off" the brightest students from traditional public schools, and attract mostly white students, have turned out to be mistaken.[45] This is consistent with recent findings that freely chosen private schools are generally better integrated by race and socioeconomic status than public schools.[46] So, in their social effects, choice programs may have an advantage over both traditional public schools and over the other reforms discussed above.

History's Lessons

We can learn a lot from the reforms that have been tried to date. We know that indiscriminately channeling more funding into our existing education system does not reliably

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

improve outcomes. We also know that some relatively expensive programs, such as reducing class size, can achieve positive results, but that these are far more limited in scope than we thought. Our experiences with both government-imposed standards and model-school programs reveal that good intentions don't reliably translate into good outcomes.

Without some kind of incentive structure to ensure that standards and materials are wisely chosen and properly implemented, practical applications often fail to live up to expectations. Charter schools and vouchers attempt to add that missing ingredient, by injecting parental choice and competition between schools into our education system. Early results are generally positive, but critics of these programs are still far from convinced.

At the very least, past reforms point to the need for a systematic, reliable, lasting mechanism for promoting educational excellence. The question is: Where to look for such a mechanism? We can ask how people in other nations educate their children, but most industrialized nations have systems very similar to our own. There are certainly variations in outcomes between them, but these are generally attributable to cultural factors, and to current curriculum choices (often just as arbitrary as our own), and so provide only limited insight into the sort of system we seek.[47]

What we can do is look at history. Schooling is not a new invention. Its lineage can be traced back two-and-a-half-thousand years, and this awesome wealth of experience has many lessons to teach us. We cannot, however, just pick and choose one or a few historical school systems and claim that they would necessarily work for us today. After all, many factors outside the classroom affect educational outcomes, and societies have changed much in the past two-and-a-half millennia.

A more promising approach is to look for trends in the kinds of systems that worked well or poorly across many different cultural settings. We can also compare educational outcomes between similar and contemporary societies that adopted different education systems. Finally, it is useful to see what happened to educational outcomes when a given society abandoned one system of education in favor of another.

In Market Education: The Unknown History, I applied this three-pronged approach to a dozen civilizations from Greece in the 5th

century B.C. and the early medieval Muslim empire, to 19th century America and modern Japan.[48] That research led to the following remarkable conclusion:

Free education markets, in which parents choose their children's schools and schools must compete with one another to attract and serve those children, consistently outperform all other approaches to school governance.

Though parental choice and market forces are seen as path-breaking innovations by their advocates and as dangerously unprecedented reforms by their opponents, they are neither. The first system of broad-based education that reached beyond a tiny ruling elite was the education marketplace of ancient Athens, 2,500 years ago. Time and again throughout history, individuals and groups created schools in response to public demand without the need for government intervention. Even the view that state-run school systems were needed to bring literacy and learning to the masses is mistaken. Both literacy and elementary school enrollment were nearly universal in England and the United States before public schools were widely established in either nation.

The wealth of evidence on which these findings are based is extensive. So much so, in fact, that it is difficult to do it justice within the confines of so brief an essay as this. Rather than attempt a pared-down summary of that evidence which would unavoidably be "abridged too far," I encourage readers to see the full presentation in Market Education. In place of an overly compressed list of historical precedents, it's more sensible to jump right to the heart of the matter: to a discussion of the reasons why education markets have consistently performed so well under widely varying social conditions.

Far from being a policy smorgasbord, from which individual elements can be casually selected or rejected based on personal taste or political expediency, education markets behave much more like fragile ecosystems. If any essential element is eliminated, the entire system begins to decline. What then are the essential elements of an education market? Based on my research, they are as follows:[49]

- Choice for parents
- Direct financial responsibility for parents
- Freedom for educators
- Competition among schools
- The profit motive for schools

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Taken together, these five factors create the incentive that is missing from the current system. They promote the development of effective educational methods, and also the dissemination and perpetuation of those methods. They constitute, in other words, exactly the sort of mechanism we are looking for to address our educational problems.

Are they controversial? Yes. Would most of us prefer it if direct parental financial responsibility and the profit motive could be dropped from the list? Of course. There is no question that if effective substitutes could be found for these factors it would significantly broaden the appeal of an education market.

The trouble is, there are no such substitutes. Having parents pay directly for their own children's education has proven to be an indispensable component of effective education markets from their inception in classical Athens all the way to their most recent incarnation in the Japanese tutoring system that has given us successes like Kumon. However distasteful this idea may seem on the surface, the logic that underlies it is obvious and inescapable: what people pay for, they pay attention to, and what they get for free they become complacent about. We all know this to be true from our everyday lives, and the fact that it holds just as true in the field of education as it does elsewhere should not surprise us.

Nevertheless, it does pose a problem. How do we ensure that all children, regardless of family income, have access to good schools if the creation and perpetuation of good schools depends on parents footing some or all of the bill? We do not have to look far for the answer. By offering need-based financial assistance to low-income parents, all Americans could become full participants in the educational marketplace. Those who could afford to pay for their own children's education would do so, while those needing varying degrees of financial help would receive it. This would preserve the benefits of direct tuition payment by parents for the vast majority of the population, since only a fraction of parents would need to have the entire cost of their children's education defrayed by others.[50]

The best way to provide such assistance has been a subject of considerable debate among scholars in recent years, but unlike most education policy debates, it has been remarkably civil, rational, and

29

empirically grounded. The people attempting to resolve this issue have demonstrated that their concern is simply to find the best way of empowering low-income parents to pursue educational excellence for their children.

Some favor a form of education voucher similar to that in use in the city of Milwaukee, while others seek to promote the spread of private scholarship-granting organizations through the use tax credits, as the state of Arizona has begun to do. One thing that both sides agree on is that existing programs currently serve far too few children, and that all of our nation's families deserve to be empowered to seek out the best schools for them, whether those schools are independent or are run by the state.

The other element of true education markets that lacks popular appeal is the need for a more substantial percentage of schools to be operated for-profit. While this idea certainly sounds mercenary in the context we're used to on the subject of education, it only expresses what we all mean when we say that private schools seem to be of higher quality than public ones. Private schools have the incentive to excel that public schools do not, and for this reason, they do better. That's why so many public school teachers send their children to them.[51]

No matter how unsettling the idea of for-profit schools may seem to us today, their importance is as obvious as it is monumental. The absence of the profit motive has been the chief reason that the top teachers and the best methods have been unable to reach the millions of children who need them.

In the absence of a profit motive, the best public and independent non-profit schools serve roughly the same number of children year after year, simply turning away children when their existing classrooms are full. Institutions like the elite prep schools of New England and the progressive Laboratory School in Chicago have not been able to reach more than one or a few thousand students annually, though many have been in existence for more than a century.

Contrast their experience with that of for-profit tutoring schools such as Kumon, which have managed to grow explosively to keep pace with growing demand. Within the vibrant Japanese tutoring industry, top teachers are paid salaries on a par with that nation's top baseball players. By creating new curricula, developing new methods, and training new teachers, these top teachers

are able to bring their gifts to hundreds of thousands of children.

Kumon and its Japanese competitors are not alone. Other popular for-profit tutoring schools, such as America's own Sylvan Learning Systems, have also managed to expand rapidly in response to rising demand for their services. Even at the college level, institutions like the University of Phoenix have demonstrated how the profit motive can fuel rapid expansion of schools that do a good job of meeting students' needs. It has long been known that the ability to rapidly disseminate popular services is a hallmark of for-profit enterprises.[52] The belief that this relationship does not apply to schools is based on prejudice and simply mistaken.[53]

Once we've made it over the twin hurdles of accepting the need for parents to have direct financial responsibility for their children's education and the need for at least some schools to be spurred to excellence by the profit motive, there still remains the nagging question of the social effects of market education. We all want our schools to foster strong and harmonious communities, and we would not wish to jeopardize that goal even if literacy rates and academic achievement were greatly improved in the process.

Fortunately, concerns over the social effects of parental choice in an open marketplace have been unwarranted. In fact, they have been exactly backward. Time and again, it has been free education markets that have allowed diverse groups to harmoniously pursue both their shared educational goals and their unique and varied traditions.

It has not been diversity that has set neighbor against neighbor, but coercion. If parents had been allowed to choose their own schools rather than being forced to relocate in order to send their children elsewhere, much of the segregation of neighborhoods over the past several decades by socioeconomic level would never have taken place. We seldom think of the public education system in terms other than those of equality of opportunity for all, but this is an instance in which the cause of equality has been disserved by public school policy.

When understood in this way, the endless series of battles for control of public schooling can finally be seen for what it is, an inevitable and unfortunate side effect of creating an establishment of education. The founding fathers of our nation wisely forbade Congress from establishing

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

a single system of religion for all citizens, in order to avoid the turmoil that this had caused in England. So, too, must we realize that any establishment of a single "official" system of education for all children invariably leads to conflict within diverse communities. It has repeatedly done so throughout history.

Free-market education, by contrast, has consistently allowed heterogeneous peoples to more harmoniously pursue their educational needs and goals.[54] Though private schools have become vastly better integrated over the past 40 years, our public school system is little better integrated today than it was when the first mandatory busing program was introduced.[55]

A Closing Plea

Perhaps this is too much to take in at once. It may be that the idea of moving to a market-based system of education seems too big a departure from the school system we have grown accustomed to.

But the system we have grown accustomed to has failed us. If we truly care about our children we must take a long, hard look at the underlying reasons for its failure. Our school system is not falling short academically because of the people who staff it or the curricula they teach. It is not falling short due to lack of funds or good ideas. It is falling short academically because it lacks a mechanism that consistently promotes, identifies, perpetuates and disseminates good ideas.

Our school system is falling short of our social goals because parents do not have a choice, a freedom they should have in the United States of America. By its very design, the prevalent system of public schooling forces a needless conformity on a vibrant, diverse and dynamic society.

We need to learn to live happily and harmoniously with one another. But people do not learn the value of liberty and mutual respect from a monolithic school apparatus that forces them to either accept the views of the dominant group or to impose their own views instead. We have enjoyed religious harmony in this nation not because we have forced all our citizens to attend an established Church, but precisely because we have not done so. The social conflicts that arise around public schooling do so precisely because public schooling is an establishment of education.

Yes, market-based education, coupled with financial assistance for

low-income families, is a bold idea. But the time has come for bold ideas. At the very least, we owe it to our children to openly discuss the merits of reintroducing market incentives in education—not in the hostile fashion that has become the norm in recent reform debates, but with care, civility and wisdom.

Their future—our future—depends on it.

33

Endnotes

[1] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development & Statistics Canada, Literacy, Economy and Society (Paris: 1995), 152-54.

[2] See family income breakdowns in the above publication.

[3] Hart & Teeter, "A Measured Response: Americans Speak On Education Reform," Results from survey/focus group research conducted April - May 2001 for the Educational Testing Service. Available on-line at: ftp://etsis1.ets.org/pub/corp/2001_executive_report.pdf

[4] National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 2000 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2000), Table 170. Available on-line at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/digest/dt170.html

[5] Note that the cost of educating physically disabled children is generally higher than the cost of educating children who are not disabled but who are nonetheless classified as "learning disabled." The percentage of physically disabled children has fallen over the past 30 years, however, while the number of non-disabled children labeled "learning disabled" has risen dramatically.

For a discussion of these issues, see: Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), Chapter 6.

[6] Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), 178-189.

[7] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development & Statistics Canada, Literacy, Economy and Society (Paris: 1995), 152-54.

[8] Eric A. Hanushek, Steven G. Rivkin and Lori L. Taylor, "Aggregation and the Estimated Effects of School Resources," The Review of Economics and Statistics, v. 78, no. 4 (November 1996), p. 626.

Eric A. Hanushek, "The Economics of Schooling: Production and Efficiency in Public Schools," Journal of Economic Literature, v. 24 (September 1986), pp. 1141-1177.

Richard Vedder, Joshua Hall, and Michael Melander, "Determinants of Ohio Student Performance," working paper (Athens, Ohio: Department of Economics, Ohio University, January 15, 1998).

[9] Stephen Childs and Charol Shakeshaft, "A Meta-Analysis of Research on the Relationship Between Educational Expenditures and Student Achievement," Journal of Education Finance, vol. 12, no. 3 (1986): 260.

[10] Erich Gundlach, Ludger Wößmann, and Jens Gmelin. "The Decline of Schooling Productivity in OECD Countries." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Royal Economic Society, St. Andrews, July 10-13, 2000. See also: Ludger Wößmann, "New Evidence on the Missing Resource-Performance Link in Education." Kiel Working Paper No. 1051, Kiel Institute of World Economics. June 2001.

[11] Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), 209-211.

[12] University of Oregon College of Education, "Class Size Reduction Initiatives,

By State," (ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management). Available on-line at: http://eric.uoregon.edu/publications/policy_reports/class_size/initiatives.html

[13] U.S. Department of Education, "Local Success Stories: Reducing Class Size," November 1999. Available on-line at: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/ClassSize/localsuccess.html

[14] American Federation of Teachers, "Small Class Size: Education Reform That Works," Available on-line at: http://www.aft.org/issues/class_size.html

[15] National Education Association, "NEA Issues: Class Size," Available on-line at: http://www.nea.org/issues/classsize/

[16] Ronald G. Ehrenberg, Dominic J. Brewer, Adam Gamoran and J. Douglas Willms, "Class Size and Student Achievement," Psychological Science in the Public Interest, v. 2., no. 1 (May 2001).

[17] Hart & Teeter, "A Measured Response: Americans Speak On Education Reform," Results from survey/focus group research conducted April - May 2001 for the Educational Testing Service. Available on-line at: ftp://etsis1.ets.org/pub/corp/2001_executive_report.pdf

[18] Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), 166-167.

[19] Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), 154-176.

[20] Richard M. Wolf, "National Standards: Do We Need Them?" Educational Researcher, v. 27, no. 4 (1998), p. 22-25.

[21] After being notified of suspicious answers to some essay questions, the Michigan Treasury Dept. found 20 schools guilty of cheating on the MEAP achievement test. These schools gave answers to special education students and drilled students in advance using exact questions from unreleased "active" copies of the test. See: Amy Franklin, "State releases MEAP cheating report," The Detroit News. August 31, 2001. Available on-line at: http://detnews.com/2001/schools/0108/31/-283350.htm

[22] Elaine Woo, "40 Grade Schools Cheated on Skill Tests, State Finds," Los Angeles Times, September 1, 1988, p. 1.

[23] Drew Lindsay, "Whodunit: Someone cheated on standardized tests at a Connecticut school. And it wasn't the students," Education Week, October 2, 1996, pp. 27, 28.

Helen O'Neill and Denise Lavoie, "A winning school loses its magic," Associated Press, Seattle Times, April 6, 1997, pp. A6.

[24] John J. Cannell, How Public Educators Cheat on Standardized Achievement Tests (Albuquerque, N.M.: Friends for Education, 1989), p. 15.

[25] Janie L. Hall and Paul F. Kleine, "Educators' Perceptions of NRT Misuse," Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, vol.11, no. 2 (1992): 20.

[26] John Lawson and Harold Silver, A Social History of Education in England (London: Butler & Tanner Ltd., 1973), 290.

[27] "Teach Pupils French from age of seven," The Times, May 29, 1997, General News section.

[28] Barbara Levine (ed.), "Chronology of John Dewey's Life and Work," September, 2001. Available on-line at: http://www.siu.edu/~deweyctr/chrono.html and

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

James Fieser and Bradley Dowden (eds.), "John Dewey, Life and Works," The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. 2001. Available on-line at: http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/d/dewey.htm

[29] UCLS Overview. Available on-line at: http://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/about/overview.html

[30] Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, 391 U.S. 430 (1968) (USSC+). Full text available on-line at www.USSCPlus.com

[31] Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) (USSC+)

[32] Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), 133-134.

[33] Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), 154-156.

[34] The 300-school estimate is from: James Traub, "Better By Design? A Consumer's Guide to Schoolwide Reform," December 1999, The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. Available on-line at: http://www.edexcellence.net/library/bbd/better_by_design.html

The 150-school estimate is from: Rebecca Herman, Project Director, "An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Reform," American Association of School Administrators, 1999. Available on-line at: http://www.aasa.org./reform/index.htm

[35] This estimate of the number of public schools is taken from: NCES, "CCD Quick Facts: Facts, Figures and Frequently Asked Questions About Schools and School Districts," compiled from the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core of Data. Available on-line at: http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/quickfacts.html

[36] The 1,500-school estimate is from: James Traub, "Better By Design? A Consumer's Guide to Schoolwide Reform," December 1999, The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. Available on-line at: http://www.edexcellence.net/library/bbd/better_by_design.html

The 1,130-school estimate is from: Rebecca Herman, Project Director, "An Educator's Guide to Schoolwide Reform," American Association of School Administrators, 1999. Available on-line at: http://www.aasa.org./reform/index.htm

[37] Herbert J. Walberg, "The Diogenes Factor," Education Week, April 8, 1998.

[38] Debra Viadero, "Miami Study Critiques 'Success for All,'" Education Week, January 27, 1999. Available on-line at: http://www.edweek.org/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=20succes.h18&keywords=success%20for%20all%20

[39] Adam Tucker, "A Response to: An Educators' Guide to Schoolwide Reform," Coalition of Essential Schools, Inc. (undated). Available on-line at: http://www.aasa.org/reform/Appendix/letter13.htm

[40] Lynn Olson, "Following the Plan," Education Week, April 14, 1999. Available on-line at: http://www.edweek.org/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=31implem.h18&keywords= coalition%20of%20essential%20schools

[41] Thomas L. Good, Jennifer S. Braden and Darrel W. Drury, "Charting a New Course: Fact and Fiction about Charter Schools," October, 2000, NSBA.

[42] The Center for Educational Reform (CER), "What the Research Reveals About Charter Schools," Nov. 2, 2000, CER. Available

on-line at: http://www.edreform.com/pubs/charters.htm

[43] Patrick J. Wolf, Paul E. Peterson, Martin R. West. "Results of a School Voucher Experiment: The Case of Washington, D.C. After Two Years." Paper prepared for the Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association, August 30-September 2, 2001, San Francisco, California.

Daniel P. Mayer, Paul E. Peterson, David E. Myers, Christina Clark Tuttle, William G. Howell. "School Choice in New York City After Three Years: An Evaluation of the School Choice Scholarships Program, Final Report." February 19, 2002. Research report by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., and the Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University.

Jay P. Greene. "The Effect of School Choice: An Evaluation of the Charlotte Children's Scholarship Fund Program." Education Next, August 30, 2000. Available on the Internet at: http://www.educationnext.org/unabridged/20012/greene.pdf

Kim K. Metcalf, "Cleveland Scholarship Program Evaluation: 1998 – 2000," Technical Report (2001), Indiana Center for Evaluation. Available on-line at: http://www.ode.state.oh.us/comm/news/Sep_2001_news/clev4techrep.pdf

Cecilia Elena Rouse, "Private School Vouchers and Student Achievement: An Evaluation of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program," Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 113, no. 2 (May 1998): 553-602.

William G. Howell, Patrick J. Wolf, Paul E. Peterson, and David E. Campbell, "Test-Score Effects of School Vouchers in Dayton, Ohio, New York City and Washington, D. C.: Evidence from Randomized Field Trials," Paper prepared for the annual meetings of the American Political Science, Association, Washington, D. C., September 2000.

Jay Greene, Paul Peterson and Jingtao Du, "The Effectiveness of School Choice in Milwaukee: A Secondary Analysis of Data from the Program's Evaluation," Paper prepared for presentation before the Panel on the Political Analysis of Urban School Systems at the August-September 1996 meetings of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, California, Friday, August 30. Available on-line at: http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/pepg/op/evaluate.htm

[44] John Witte, The Market Approach to Education: An Analysis of America's First Voucher Program (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[45] Office of Educational Research and Improvement, "A National Study of Charter Schools, 1998, " U.S. Department of Education. Executive Summary available on-line at: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/charter98/execsum.html

Jay P. Greene, "The Effect of Education Vouchers: An Evaluation of the Charlotte Children's Scholarship Fund Program," The Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, August 30, 2000. Available on-line at: http://www.csfcharlotte.org/research.htm

U.S. Department of Education. The State of Charter Schools 2000 - Fourth-Year Report, January 2000. The relevant section can be found on-line at: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/charter4thyear/c.html#1

[46] Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), 275-277.

[47] Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), Chapter 7.

[48] Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999).

[49] Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), Chapter 9.

[50] Direct parental financial responsibility is important because it gives parents a powerful incentive to become informed about their educational options, and to choose wisely. However, it is not necessary for every parent to be a savvy shopper in order for all parents to benefit from market forces. Consider the case of grocery stores. "Not every shopper carefully compares grocery prices, and very few do so for every item they buy every time they go to the supermarket. Despite this fact, prices are held in check, and tend to be comparable from one grocery store to the other. The reason is that enough people are price-conscious enough of the time for it to be in the store managers' interests to set reasonable prices. Over time, a supermarket that charges considerably higher prices than its competitors loses enough business due to the departure of savvy customers that it is forced to lower prices or to shut its doors. So, thanks to those few price-conscious individuals, all the store's customers benefit from the lower prices stores are forced to adopt. As a result, it is possible for someone to go into an unfamiliar grocery store, buy all the items on their list, and be fairly confident that he or she will pay a reasonable price.

"This same effect holds in other free market enterprises, including education. When parents have educational choice and schools must compete to attract their business, enough parents are cautious in making their selection for it to be in the interest of school managers to offer a quality service at a fair price. Those parents who are not careful are, essentially, free riders, benefiting from the informed decisions of their neighbors without having to expend any great effort themselves." – From Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), 318-319.

[51] Dennis Doyle and James Hirni, "Where Teachers Send Their Own Children to School," Heritage Foundation Business/Education Insider, no. 42 (October-November 1995). http://www.heritage.org/library/categories/education/bei42.html

[52] Nathan Rosenberg and Larry Birdzell, How the West Grew Rich : The Economic Transformation of the Industrial World (New York: Basic Books, 1987).

[53] For a detailed discussion see: Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), pp. 304-318.

[54] Andrew J. Coulson, Market Education: The Unknown History (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1999), Chapters 2-4, summarized on pp. 319-320.

[55] James S. Kunen, "The End of Integration," Time, April 29, 1996, 39-41.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Additional Research

Search. Print. Read.
www.mackinac.org
Any publication. Any time. Absolutely free.
1-989-631-0900

Reports

The Case for Choice in Schooling: Restoring Parental Control of Education
$5.00 *S2001-01* *www.mackinac.org/3236*

The Cost of Remedial Education
$5.00 *S2000-05* *www.mackinac.org/3025*

Viewpoint *commentaries*

Is Michigan Public Education Improving?
November 2001 *V2001-41* *www.mackinac.org/3842*

Less Government, Not More, Is Key to Academic Achievement and Accountability
October 2001 *V2001-36* *www.mackinac.org/3786*

Michigan Public School Teachers Launch a Non-Union Revolution
March 2002 *V2002-12* *www.mackinac.org/4097*

"Teach for America" Success Points the Way to Teacher Certification Reform
February 2002 *V2002-06* *www.mackinac.org/4045*

Graduation Rates an Imperfect Measure of School Excellence
January 2002 *V2002-04* *www.mackinac.org/3932*

Other education commentaries

A New Direction for Education Reform
www.mackinac.org/3541

Education Reform, School Choice, and Tax Credits
www.mackinac.org/4191

Another Path to School Choice
$5.00 *S2000-05* *www.mackinac.org/3183*

Periodicals

The quarterly *Michigan Education Report* newspaper is filled with news and analysis for educators, parents and policy makers. ***www.EducationReport.org***

The weekly *Michigan Education Digest* provides summaries and links to the latest education news. ***www.EducationReport.org/pubs/med/***

These and other publications are available at no charge via the Internet at **www.mackinac.org**. For telephone orders, please call the Mackinac Center at (989) 631-0900. You may also order print copies via the internet. The Center accepts Visa, MasterCard, and Discover/NOVUS for your convenience.

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Board of Scholars

Dr. Donald Alexander
Western Michigan University

Dr. John Attarian
Freelance Writer

Dr. Thomas Bertonneau
Writer and Independent Scholar

Dr. Brad Birzer
Hillsdale College

Dr. Peter Boettke
George Mason University

Dr. John Bornhofen
Grand Valley State University (ret.)

Dr. William Browne
Central Michigan University

Dr. Stephen Colarelli
Central Michigan University

Andrew Coulson
Mackinac Center for Public Policy

Dr. Keith Crocker
University of Michigan

Robert Crowner
Eastern Michigan University

Dr. Richard Cutler
Michigan Association of Scholars

Robert Daddow
Oakland County Executive

Dr. Stephen Dresch
Jhëön & Associates

Dr. Richard Ebeling
Hillsdale College

Dr. Jefferson Edgens
University of Kentucky

Alfredo Esposto
Eastern Michigan University

Dr. David Felbeck
University of Michigan (ret.)

Dr. Wayland Gardner
Western Michigan University (ret.)

Dr. Wolfgang Grassl
Hillsdale College

John Grether
Northwood University

Dr. Robert C. Hanna
Hillsdale College

Dr. Dale Haywood
Northwood University

Dr. Michael Heberling
Baker College

Dr. Ormand Hook
Mecosta-Osceola Intermediate School District

Prof. Harry Hutchison
University of Detroit Law School

Dr. David Janda
Institute for Preventative Sports Medicine

Annette Kirk
Russell Kirk Center for Cultural Renewal

Dr. Robert Kleiman
Oakland University

Dr. Dale Matcheck
Northwood University

Dr. Paul McCracken
University of Michigan

Charles Meister
Lake Superior State University

Glen Moots
Northwood University

Dr. George Nastas III
Marketing Consultants

Dr. John Pafford
Northwood University

Dr. Mark Perry
University of Michigan - Flint

Dr. Leonard Plachta
Central Michigan University (ret.)

Dr. Karen Potter-Witter
Michigan State University

Gregory Rehmke
Foundation for Economic Education

Dr. Steve Safranek
Ave Maria School of Law

Louis Schimmel, Jr.
Schimmel Municipal Consultants, LLC

Dr. Howard Schwartz
Oakland University

James Sheehan
Competitive Enterprise Institute

Rev. Robert Sirico
Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty

Dr. John Taylor
Wayne State University

Prof. Harry Veryser, Jr.
Walsh College

John Walter, Jr.
Dow Corning Corporation (ret.)

Dr. William Wilson
Economic Consultant

Dr. Martin Wing
Kettering University

Dr. Gary Wolfram
Hillsdale College

Board of Directors

D. Joseph Olson, Chairman
Lawrence Reed, President

Richard Antonini
Peter Cook
Hon. Paul Gadola
Richard Haworth
Mara Letica
Edward Levy, Jr.
Rodney Lockwood, Jr.
Joseph Maguire
Richard McLellan
James Rodney
Linda Rodney

38B

Mackinac Center for Public Policy
140 West Main Street
P.O. Box 568
Midland, Michigan 48640
(989) 631-0900 • Fax (989) 631-0964
www.mackinac.org • mcpp@mackinac.org

MACKINAC CENTER
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").